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ABSTRACT

The Center for Psychology in Schools and Education of the American Psychological Association (APA) promotes the consistent presence of the field of psychology in policy, practice, research, and programs for schools and education. The Center also raises awareness of the profession's commitment to schools and education among: APA members; national, state, and local policymakers; and the general public. This brochure presents the following official APA policies: Psychology and Services Integration; Guidelines for Identifying Appropriate Supervisors for Psychological Services in Schools; and Guidelines for Engaging in the Contractual Provision of Psychological Services in Schools. (RB)

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AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

APA POLICIES ON SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION

1995

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APA CENTER FOR PSYCHOLOGY IN SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION

The APA Center for Psychology in Schools and Education (CPSE) was established in 1994 to serve as the Association's focal point for schooling and education issues. It promotes the consistent presence of the field of psychology in policy, practice, research, and programs for schools and education. The Center also raises awareness of the profession's commitment to schools and education among APA members; national, state, and local policymakers; and the general public.

The Center functions to increase the credibility and effectiveness of psychologists in serving as advocates for policies related to education reform, school health, other learner-focused issues, practice in educational settings, and in securing external funding for research and educational development. The CPSE develops, advocates for, and monitors legislation and policy on national and state education issues for learners of all ages. It provides a distinctive focus on schools and education within the Association -- a Center by which members, policymakers, and the public can identify psychology's commitment to schools and education.

To achieve these ends, the Center coordinates the planning, implementation, and evaluation of initiatives both within and outside APA. External efforts include federal, state, regional, and district advocacy of policies and practices related to psychology and education as well as liaison and information exchange with national educational and scientific societies, other professions, federal agencies, and the general public. The Center also provides a mechanism for coordination of APA programs that bring the knowledge and methods of psychology to bear on social reforms related to schools and education by working with and highlighting the work of APA directorates, divisions, and state psychological associations.

CPSE OPERATIONS

APA CPSE operations are organized around five critical management dimensions. Each of these operational dimensions addresses a key component of leadership concerning psychology in schools and education. Center operations include

- Ψ policy development and advocacy,
- Ψ research and information,
- Ψ marketing and public relations,
- Ψ regulation, and
- Ψ and coordination/collaboration.

CPSE DIMENSIONS

Activities of the Center encompass all facets of psychology's role in American schooling and education, including health, personal, and social factors that influence schooling. These include

- Ψ science,
- Ψ educational practice,
- Ψ psychological practice, and
- Ψ public interest.

The American Psychological Association Center for Psychology in Schools and Education welcomes comments and ideas from psychologists, educators, students, parents, policymakers, agencies, businesses, and the community.

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POLICY STATEMENT ON PSYCHOLOGY AND SERVICES INTEGRATION

Whereas:

Economic, social, and demographic changes in America are dramatically affecting children and families, often resulting in greater stress and vulnerability to problems in living;

Children increasingly live in poverty, and experience related social, physical, mental health, and educational problems;

Changing family and social structures often result in the need for prevention and/or intervention services for children at all income levels;

Sound mental health and psychological development for children result when basic developmental needs are met, families are intact and functional, and social systems support these needs;

All children and families can benefit from support, health promotion, and health education as they develop;

The needs of children and families must be viewed from a systems perspective - sound mental health cannot be separated from sound physical health, success in school, and healthy family and peer relationships;

Children and families have not been a funding priority for most social or political institutions; and,

Services to children and their families are often inaccessible, limited, fragmented, and/or overlapping due to location, professional turf issues, prejudice and discrimination, restrictive funding, and poor linkages across systems,

Therefore:

APA calls for children and families to be placed as a priority on social and political agendas, including legislative, funding, service delivery, and research agendas.

APA affirms the importance of service integration to meet the comprehensive needs of children, including their psychological, educational, and mental health needs. Consequently, psychology must work collaboratively with other disciplines and across systems.

APA will work with other organizations to:

- promote policy and legislation that support comprehensive and coordinated services for children and families, including psychological services;
- explore implications of service integration for the training and roles of various disciplines, including psychology;
- develop and promote more flexible service delivery models and funding patterns; and
- promote research on the needs of children and families and on comprehensive and integrated models of service delivery.

APA will support federal, state, and local government, agencies, and schools in developing service integration models that meet psychological, educational, and mental health needs of consumers, with particular emphasis on the needs of children and families.

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August 1994

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

GUIDELINES FOR IDENTIFYING APPROPRIATE SUPERVISORS FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES IN SCHOOLS

RATIONALE

Psychologists working in school settings are often concerned about the frequent practice of being supervised by a nonpsychologist. Such nonpsychologist supervisors are often not familiar with the ethical responsibilities and professional standards that guide the practice of psychology. Without a common frame of reference, conflicts between what the profession expects or demands and what a nonpsychologist supervisor requires are likely to occur.

The American Psychological Association/National Association of School Psychologists Interorganizational Committee (APA/NASP IOC) has reviewed the issues and concerns associated with the supervision of psychological services in schools. The APA/NASP IOC developed the following policy guidelines dealing with supervision of psychological services in schools in order to provide guidance to school administrators and individual providers of school psychological services on the appropriate types of supervisors and supervisory responsibilities.

SUPERVISORS FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES IN SCHOOLS

It is recognized that school psychologists who are certified by their state education agency are permitted to use the term school psychologist or certified school psychologist as long as they are practicing in the public schools (APA Model Act for State Licensure of Psychologists, July, 1987). Employing agencies assure that an effective program of supervision and evaluation of school psychological services exists for the benefit of all students (NASP Standards for the Provision of School Psychological Services, 1984).

In context, supervision is focused on the professional psychological services and functions performed by school psychologists. At the same time, it is acknowledged that school psychologists may be administratively accountable to other school district administrators such as directors of student services (APA General Guidelines for Providers of Psychological Services, 1987).

To this end, the APA/NASP IOC believes that guidelines such as the following should be used when addressing the issue of professional supervision, at state or district levels, for school psychologists practicing in the schools:

1. School psychologists' professional psychological functions in schools should be supervised by qualified supervisory school psychologists.

2. A supervisor of school psychologists should be one who is (a) certified by the State Board of Education on the basis of having completed a program for the preparation of school psychologists that is accredited by a specialized professional accrediting body recognized by the Commission on Recognition of Post-Secondary Accreditation (APA Model Act for State Licensure of Psychologists, July, 1987); (b) who has completed three years of successful, documented, supervised experience as a school psychologist; and (c) who has been designated by an employing agency as a supervisor responsible for school psychological services in the agency (NASP Standards for the Provision of School Psychological Services, 1984).

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GUIDELINES FOR ENGAGING IN THE CONTRACTUAL PROVISION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES IN SCHOOLS

RATIONALE

Given the economic recession of the past decade, school districts have sought less expensive approaches to providing psychological services to students in schools. One option frequently explored is the replacement of full-time school psychologists employed by the district with psychological services provided by psychologists on a contractual basis. Such contractual services are often part-time and sometimes restricted to only those services the district is legally required to provide.

While part-time or full-time contractual services provided by competent psychologists are reasonable alternatives, such contractual services do raise potential problems. One concern is the appropriate credential that should be obtained by a contractual provider of psychological services to schools. The APA Model Act for State Licensure of Psychologists (APA, 1987) and most state licensing laws exempt from licensure those individuals who are credentialed as school psychologists by a state department of education and are "employed" by the schools. As contractual service provision has become more common, the question has been raised by both individuals and various state boards of psychology and education as to whether an individual can be hired to provide school psychological services on a contractual basis without a license from a board of psychology. One interpretation has been advanced that contractual services, whether full- or part-time, still constitute employment by the schools and thus no license is necessary beyond a department of education credential. The alternative interpretation holds that contractual services, whether full- or part-time, constitute the independent (i.e., autonomous) provision of services. Under the latter interpretation, the individual does not meet the criteria of employment and thus should not be exempted from licensure.

A second concern related to contractual services in school psychology deals with the potential for psychologists to lose their professional autonomy and be hired to perform specific functions rather than function as a professional who delivers comprehensive services. A clear example is a situation where a psychologist is hired to conduct assessments for special education placement where the assessment procedures and parameters are dictated by the contract with no opportunity to alter the process, if necessary. Further, such narrowly prescribed service contracts impede the provision of comprehensive and integrated services.

The American Psychological Association/National Association of School Psychologists Interorganizational Committee (APA/NASP IOC) has reviewed the issues and concerns associated with the provision of psychological services on a contractual basis. The APA/NASP IOC developed the following policy guidelines dealing with contractual services in school psychology in order to provide guidance to state boards of education and psychology, school administrators, and individual providers of school psychological services on the appropriate credentialing and use of contractual service providers.

Recognizing that there are school psychologists who provide services to school districts on a part-time basis, and in order to ensure professionalism in services, the APA/NASP IOC recommends the following as a way to identify those school psychologists who function as employees of a school district. Other psychologists who are not employees are considered to be independent service providers under contract

CONTRACTUAL PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES IN SCHOOLS

to a school district and therefore must be licensed by a state psychology regulatory board. In doing so, the APA/NASP IOC:

- recognizes that school districts employ state education agency-credentialed school psychologists and that employment should be defined to include part-time employment.
- reaffirms the need for school systems to employ school psychologists, whether employed full- or part-time, to deliver a comprehensive range of services.
- emphasizes that these public policy recommendations are meant to include, not exclude, existing school psychological personnel.

Within the bounds of state law and statute, any contract with most of the following conditions should constitute employee status of a school psychologist by a school system:

a) that the person providing the agreed-upon services is a school psychologist who is certified by the state board of education on the basis of having completed a program for the preparation of school psychologists that is accredited by a specialized professional accrediting body recognized by the Commission on Recognition of Post-Secondary Accreditation.

b) that the work is done in the context of an employer-employee relationship (e.g., the work is to be performed on school board property, using school board supplies, and under school board supervision).

c) that the contract is such that the school district takes legal responsibility for the work-related conduct of the school psychologist.

d) that the school system directly pays the school psychologist for all services rendered.

e) that the agreed-upon school psychological services are provided in the context of a comprehensive service delivery system and are not limited to any specific type of service and include opportunities for follow-up and continuing consultation.

f) that the school psychologist is given appropriate access and information to provide the agreed-upon services, and that he or she is familiar with the instructional resources of the employing district such that any recipients of such services have the same opportunities as those served by a full-time school psychologist.

g) that the agreed-upon school psychological services are provided in a manner consistent with recognized ethical and professional standards, including appropriate supervision.

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